

Rock Island Arsenal
Lumber Shed
(Building 138)
Second Street between South Avenue
and Ramsey Street
Rock Island
Rock Island County
Illinois

HAER No. IL-20-N

HAER
ILL,
81-ROCIL,
3/138-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL

LUMBER SHED

(Building 138)

HAER No. IL-20N

HAER
ILL.
81-20014
3/138-

Location: Second Street Between South Avenue and Ramsey Street,
Rock Island Arsenal,
Rock Island,
Rock Island County, Illinois
UTM: 15.704850.4598720
Quad: Davenport East

Date of Construction: 1886

Present Owner and Occupant: U.S. Army

Present Use: Storage

Significance: After taking command of Rock Island Arsenal in 1865, General Thomas Jefferson Rodman devised a master plan for the installation calling for the construction of ten large manufacturing shops, five on each side of the island's major east-west thoroughfare. These core manufacturing structures were supplemented by a variety of administrative, residential, maintenance, storage, and utility buildings. Although only a few buildings were erected prior to Rodman's death in 1871, subsequent construction under Rodman's nineteenth-century successors closely conformed to the original plan.

Forming a cohesive architectural statement that is unique among Midwest government installations, the Rodman plan buildings are the administrative and technological core of Rock Island Arsenal, one of only two "old-line, nineteenth-century arsenals still in operation for munitions production. The buildings are vital for understanding the history of American ordnance development and manufacture from the Spanish American War to the present.

Constructed in 1886 in a storage area south of the stone manufacturing shops, the Lumber Shed was one of the last buildings erected under the general scope of the Rodman plan. Although considerably less ornate than the

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Greek Revival manufacturing buildings, its classical style harmonized with the architectural tone of the earlier Rodman plan buildings. The structure is part of the Rock Island Arsenal National Register Historic District.

Historian:

Jeffrey A. Hess, February 1985

Architectural Historian:

David Arbogast, February 1985

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: According to an official Ordnance Department history of Rock Island Arsenal, the Lumber Shed was constructed in 1886 for approximately \$15,000 ("History," p. 3).
2. Architect: Not known. Plans were probably prepared by Ordnance Department staff under the supervision of Colonel Thomas G. Baylor, who assumed command of the arsenal in June 1886 (Stephens and Nothstein, p. 177).
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Army.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The building was probably erected by day labor under the supervision of Ordnance Department staff, which was the general construction practice at the arsenal during the 1880s (Bouilly, p. 125).
5. Original plans and construction: An undated drawing "traced from original cardboard drawing" is in the Rock Island Arsenal's Facilities Engineers Office. The drawing bears the description: "Rock Island Arsenal / Closed Lumber Shed / Bldg #138 / Original Title 'Lumber Shed'" (see HAER Photo No. IL-20N-11). It presents a side elevation of the building showing the structure's present configuration, except that the corner bays in the drawing have louvered arch openings instead of the present brick infill, and the roof ridge is surmounted by seven regularly spaced ventilators, which are no longer on the building. The ventilators were constructed as specified in the drawing. They are shown in a photograph published in 1898 (Tillinghast, p. 60) (see HAER Photo No. IL-20N-9). The louvers in the corner bays, however, were probably never incorporated into the original structure. The 1898 photograph shows the end bays with brick infill. An inspection of the brickwork in the end bays has determined that it is identical in character to the rest of the original masonry.
6. Alterations and additions: After 1898, the seven ventilators surmounting the roof ridge were removed. At an undetermined date, six arched openings near the east end of the north elevation were infilled with sheet metal.

B. Historical Context:

Constructed in 1886 in a storage area south of the central manufacturing shops on Rodman Avenue, the Lumber Shed was one of the

last buildings erected under the general scope of the Rodman plan. It remained in use as a lumber storehouse at least until the end of World War II (see HAER Photo No. IL-20N-10). It presently is used for miscellaneous storage. The building was designated a "Lumber Shed" on an original drawing, a tracing of which survives (see HAER Photo No. IL-20N-11). It has been designated as "Building 138" at least since 1945 (see HAER Photo No. IL-20N-10; for additional documentation see HAER No. IL-20).

Prepared by: Jeffrey A. Hess
 MacDonald and Mack Partnership
 February 1985

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is a utilitarian brick structure with Classical detailing reflecting the detailing on the nearby stone shops. It is one story tall on a limestone foundation.
2. Condition of fabric: The building suffers from long-term effects of neglect. The woodwork shows extreme weathering and loss of its paint coat.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building is rectangular, measuring 56' (5 bays north to south) x 235' (19 bays east to west). It is one story in height without basement or attic.
2. Foundations: Rock-faced ashlar limestone (HAER Photo Nos. IL-20N-1, IL-20N-3, IL-20N-5, and IL-20N-6) below a cut limestone water table, the foundation exposed on the south elevation.
3. Walls: The walls (HAER Photo Nos. IL-20N-1, IL-20N-2, IL-20N-3, IL-20N-4, IL-20N-5, and IL-20N-6) are tan brick to match the nearby limestone buildings. The brick is laid in running bond. Bays are defined by brick pilasters (HAER Photo Nos. IL-20N-1, IL-20N-2, IL-20N-3, IL-20N-4, IL-20N-5, and IL-20N-6) rising from the water table to a brick entablature supporting a corbelled brick cornice.
4. Structural systems: Brick bearing walls. Poured concrete floor slab (HAER Photo No. IL-20N-7) on grade. Timber truss (HAER Photo Nos. IL-20N-7 and IL-20N-8) roof system.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways: There are two large primary doorways (HAER Photo Nos. IL-20N-1, IL-20N-3, IL-20N-5, and IL-20N-6) centered in each end. The east doorway contains a pair of large, louvered wood doors painted cream set in an opening having a brick segmental-arched head and brick jambs. The west doorway contains a similar pair of louvered wood doors with a cast concrete lintel block and brick jambs. The brick above the lintel block is much lighter than the other brick and is an obvious replacement for what was probably a segmental brick arch. There are no sills or thresholds.
- b. Windows: Single window openings (HAER Photo Nos. IL-20N-1, IL-20N-2, IL-20N-3, IL-20N-4, IL-20N-5, and IL-20N-6) are located in every bay of the building except the end center bays which contain the doorways. All window openings rise from the water table to segmental arches which rise to the entablature. The window openings of the bays adjacent to the corners are filled with tan brick which is original to the construction of the building. Six openings near the east end of the north elevation have been filled with painted sheet metal. All north and south openings contain fixed, double sets of large open wood louvers similar to the doors. All east and west openings contain single sets of these louvers. All louvers are painted cream.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof (HAER Photo Nos. IL-20N-1, IL-20N-3, IL-20N-5, and IL-20N-6) is a simple hip covered with black, asphalt shingling.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There is a corbelled tan brick cornice (HAER Photo Nos. IL-20N-1, IL-20N-3, IL-20N-5, and IL-20N-6) supporting boxed wood eaves. There is no gutter system.
- c. Dormers, cupola, towers: None.

C. Interior Description:

1. Floor plans: The floor plan consists of a single, large storage room.
2. Flooring: Poured concrete slab (HAER Photo No. IL-20N-7).
3. Wall and ceiling finishes: Exposed brick walls (HAER Photo No. IL-20N-7) and open ceiling (HAER Photo Nos. IL-20N-7 and IL-20N-8) with exposed timber trusses, purlins and wood roof sheathing.

4. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: No interior doorways or doors.
- b. Windows: The window openings (HAER Photo No. IL-20N-7) have no casings.

5. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Lighting: Although no artificial lighting was probably used originally, there are incandescent electric fixtures (HAER Photo No. IL-20N-7) attached to the bottom chord of the roof trusses.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: The building is aligned east-west and is located south of Building 137, a lumber shed, and north of Building 139, a lumber and pipe shed, southwest of the intersection of South Avenue and Second Street. The site slopes to the south, leaving the south foundation partially exposed.

Prepared by: David Arbogast
Architectural Conservator
February 1985

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

The Rock Island Arsenal Engineering Plans and Services Division has a tracing of an original drawing (see HAER Photo No. IL-20N-11) that bears the following description: "Rock Island Arsenal / Closed Lumber Shed / Bldg. #138 / Original Title 'Lumber Shed' / Drawing No. 138-101, Formerly D40006A." The louvers in the corner bays specified in the drawing were apparently not incorporated into the original construction; brick infill was substituted.

B. Early Views:

The picture collection in the Rock Island Arsenal Historical Office contains a photograph (see HAER Photo No. IL-20N-9), originally published in 1898 (Tillinghast, p. 60), that shows the building before its ventilators were removed. The photograph also shows the corner bays with brick infill rather than louvers as specified in the original architectural drawing (see HAER Photo No. IL-20N-11).

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Hess, Jeffrey A., and Mack, Robert C. "Historic Properties Report Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, Illinois". Prepared by MacDonald and Mack Partnership, and Building Technology Incorporated for the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1985. The report, with accompanying inventory cards, is filed as field records in the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, under HAER No. IL-20.

"History of Rock Island Arsenal Called for by O.O. 25301-D-195." Ca. 1913. Rock Island Arsenal Historical Office.

"Industrial Facilities Inventory, Rock Island Arsenal." Prepared by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, 1946. Rock Island Arsenal Engineering Plans and Services Division. Lists building as "Building 138, lumber storage."

Real Property Cards, Rock Island Arsenal Engineering Plans and Services Division. Briefly describes building's structural characteristics and provides sketchy history of maintenance operations.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Bouilly, Robert. "Arsenal Island." Joined by a River: Quad Cities, ed. Frederick I. Anderson. N. pl.: Lee Enterprises, Incorporated, 1982. Excellent historical analysis of the arsenal's development to about 1910, written by a historian in the Rock Island Arsenal Historical Office.

Flagler, D[aniel] W[ebster]. A History of the Rock Island Arsenal from Its Establishment in 1863 to December 1876. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1877. Provides detailed description of original Rodman plan for the arsenal.

Nothstein, Ira O. and Stephens, Clifford W. A History of Rock Island Arsenal from Earliest Times to 1954. Rock Island: U.S. Army, Rock Island Arsenal, 1965. 3 vols. Rock Island Arsenal Historical Office. The best account of the arsenal's general operations.

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Tillinghast, B. F. Rock Island Arsenal: In Peace and in War.
Chicago: The Shepard Company, 1898. Reproduces photograph
showing building's present configuration.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Record Group 156 at the National Archives contains correspondence on the construction and operation of Rock Island Arsenal from 1871 to 1903. This material is also available on 216 reels of microfilm at the Browning Museum, Rock Island Arsenal.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was part of a program initiated through a memorandum of agreement between the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Army. Stanley J. Fried, Chief, Real Estate Branch of Headquarters DARCOM, and Dr. Robert J. Kapsch, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, were program directors. Sally Kress Tompkins of HABS/HAER was program manager, and Robie S. Lange of HABS/HAER was project manager. Building Technology Incorporated, Silver Spring, Maryland, under the direction of William A. Brenner, acted as primary contractor, and MacDonald and Mack Partnership, Minneapolis, was a major subcontractor. The project included a survey of historic properties at Rock Island Arsenal, as well as preparation of an historic properties report and HABS/HAER documentation for 38 buildings. The survey, report, and documentation were completed by Jeffrey A. Hess, historian, Minneapolis; Barbara E. Hightower, historian, Minneapolis; David Arbogast, architectural historian, Iowa City, Iowa; and Robert C. Mack, architect, Minneapolis. The photographs were taken by Robert A. Ryan, J Ceronie, and Bruce A. Harms of Dennett, Muessig, Ryan, and Associates, Ltd., Iowa City, Iowa. Drawings were produced by John Palmer Low, Minneapolis.